BUDGET 2006

Ministry of
Employment and
Income Assistance

2006/07 -- 2008/09
SERVICE PLAN

BRITISH
COLUMBIA

www.gov.bc.ca

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication Data
British Columbia. Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance.
Service plan – 2006/2007/2008/09–

Annual.
Continues: British Columbia. Ministry of Human Resources. Service plan. ISSN 1705-4346
ISSN 1718-3502 = Service plan (British Columbia. Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance
Also available on the Internet.

1. British Columbia. Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance – Periodicals. 2. Public welfare – British Columbia – Periodicals. 3. Social service – British Columbia – Periodicals. I. Title. II. Title: British Columbia. Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance service plan.

HV109.B7B74 353.5'09711'05 C2006-960013-9
KEB529.T7B74

For more information on the British Columbia
Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance, write to:

MINISTRY OF EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME ASSISTANCE
PO BOX 9933
STN PROV GOVT
VICTORIA, BC
V8W 9R2

or visit our website at
http://www.gov.bc.ca/eia

Published by the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance

Message from the Minister and Accountability Statement

As Minister of Employment and Income Assistance, I am pleased to present the Service Plan for 2006/07 - 2008/09, outlining our goals and objectives over the next three years. Our government is committed to providing a fair, caring and sustainable income assistance system for British Columbians most in need and helping people who are able to work to find and keep jobs. With our success in assisting so many people in leaving the caseload, the ministry is working to ensure that our programs and services continue to meet the needs of our clients.

We are redesigning our employment programs so our clients can get the services they need to benefit from B.C.'s strong economy — and succeed. The new B.C. Employment Program, which will be launched this year, will help expected to work clients in finding and keeping employment through job referral, placement, workshops and supervised self-directed job searches. For those clients with significant barriers who are not ready to enter a job or take part in an employment program, we will continue to offer a separate Community Assistance Program to provide basic life skills training.

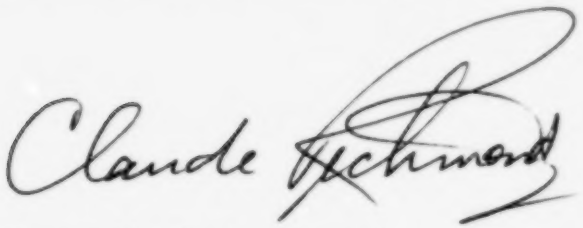
Our transition to new programming recognizes that the ministry's caseload has changed significantly in number and composition. The number of people who are expected to work has dropped and those who remain on the caseload have greater challenges. Today, a full two-thirds of our clients are people with serious barriers to employment or disabilities.

The Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance is taking a leadership role across government to support our Third Great Goal for a Golden Decade to build the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities, those with special needs, children at risk and seniors. We want British Columbians with disabilities to have the assurance of stable support they can depend on while enjoying opportunities in the workforce, as they are able, to fulfill their dreams and actively participate in their communities. During the upcoming year we will continue to consult with service providers, clients, stakeholders and staff to improve our employment programs for persons with disabilities.

We are also continuing our support for government's goal to lead the way in North America in healthy living and physical fitness. This year we will be working with other ministries, other levels of government and community organizations to provide programs and services that make a real difference in people's lives.

I look forward to working together with ministry staff to achieve our goals and I would like to take this opportunity thank them for their hard work, ongoing dedication and professionalism.

The Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance 2006/07 – 2008/09 Service Plan was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. I am accountable for the basis on which the plan has been prepared. All material fiscal assumptions and policy decisions as of February 10, 2006, have been considered in preparing the plan and I am accountable for achieving the specific objectives in the plan.



Honourable Claude Richmond
Minister of Employment and Income Assistance

February 10, 2006

106-02988/

Table of Contents

Ministry Overview

Purpose of Ministry 5

Vision, Mission and Values 8

Strategic Context 10

Core Business Areas 13

Resource Summary 20

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Results

Ministry Goals 21

Linkage to the Five Great Goals 21

Cross Ministry Initiatives 22

Performance Plan 24

Ministry Performance Plan 37

Related Initiatives and Planning Processes 39

Appendices 43

Ministry Overview

Purpose of Ministry

The Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance provides income assistance, disability assistance and employment programs for those British Columbians in need. These programs are administered under the BC Employment and Assistance program (BCEA), and are guided by the *Employment and Assistance Act* and the *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act*. which came into force in September 2002.

Who Our Clients Are:

The ministry delivers a variety of assistance programs and services to approximately 140,000 individuals and families in need. In order to better meet the diverse needs of our clients, the ministry has established the following client groups, each of which is supported by a suite of supports and types of assistance:

- Expected to Work (ETW): These include employable clients in need of short-term income assistance and supports, as well as those who are temporarily excused from employment obligations due to a medical condition or family situation, such as a single parent with a child under 3.
- Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers (PPMB): These are clients who experience significant and multiple barriers to employment that limit their ability to be financially independent.
- Persons with Disabilities (PWD): These are clients who experience a severe physical or mental impairment and require assistance as a result of significant restrictions in their ability to perform daily living activities.
- Children in the Home of a Relative (CIHR): If a parent is unable to care for and support their child and places the child in the home of a relative, the ministry may provide the relative with financial support.
- Seniors: These include persons aged 65 years or older, with low-incomes who are eligible for Senior's Supplement benefits and subsidized bus passes, based on their annual tax return.
- Low and moderate income families: These include individuals and families who are not direct clients of the ministry, but are eligible for health and dental assistance based on their limited incomes. Providing extended coverage to these families improves health outcomes and reduces disincentives to their financial independence.

Each of these client groups may be eligible for a suite of supports and assistance. These are elaborated upon in subsequent sections of this Service Plan.

The Services We Provide:

The ministry offers a wide variety of assistance and supports to our client groups, reflective of their client designations as well as their individual and family circumstances. These include:

- Income Assistance: Income assistance provided by the ministry includes two components: shelter allowance and support allowance. Shelter allowance assists clients in meeting their accommodation costs. Support allowance is provided to eligible clients, including clients participating in employment programs, to purchase food and other basic necessities.
- Disability Assistance: Disability assistance is available to support eligible persons with disabilities who are not expected to gain complete financial independence through employment, including clients with disabilities who are seeking work.
- Supplementary Assistance: The ministry provides a wide range of supports to clients on a case-by-case basis. A range of supplements are provided including: crisis supplements for emergency needs; medical supplies and equipment; dental and optical services; medical transportation; subsidized bus passes; alcohol and drug treatment programs and employment related expenses.
- Employment Programming: The ministry provides employment and pre-employment programs and services to clients to assist them in finding and sustaining employment — thereby achieving independence and self-reliance. Programs and services are developed and provided to clients based on their needs and readiness to work.

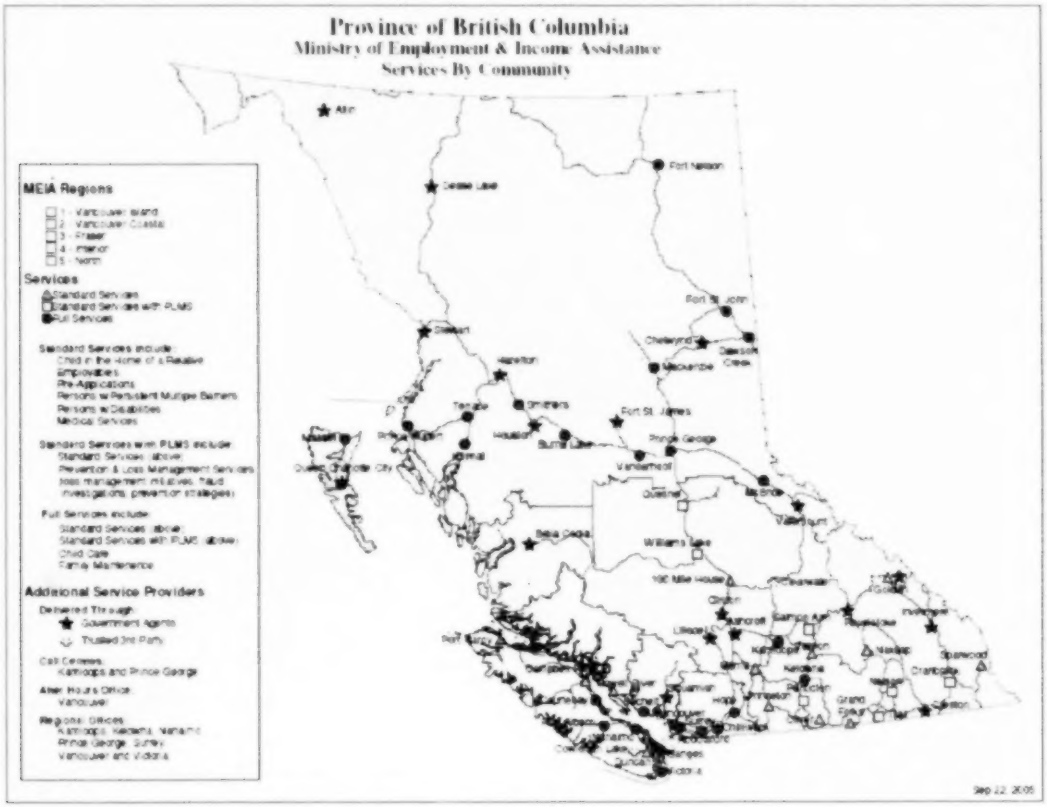
It is important to note that the ministry supports are part of a larger network of assistance provided by a number of provincial ministries and the federal government. Clients receiving our assistance and supports may also receive additional benefits, including the Canadian Pension Plan, National Child Benefit or Child Care subsidy — thereby substantially increasing their available income and financial independence.

Where We Deliver Our Services:

Approximately 2,000 ministry staff deliver our services through 104 ministry offices, 19 Government Agent branches and 3 Service Centres across the province. In addition to these community-based centres offering front-desk service, the ministry has also undertaken a new Multi-Channel Service Delivery initiative providing improved telephone and Internet services to our clients. Our ability to provide these services has been made possible by government's substantial progress in bridging the Digital Divide, and the continued expansion of supporting technologies throughout the province.

The ministry also delivers employment programming services through external service providers in regions across British Columbia. These performance-based contracted services provide employment supports that are tailored to meet local labour markets as well as the interests and circumstances of individual clients.

Developed in response to client feedback, emerging technologies and local partnerships, the ministry's service delivery network reflects our focus on improving access to services, particularly for those clients living in rural areas and persons with disabilities. Ultimately, we recognize that successful implementation of these transformational service delivery initiatives requires the continued professionalism of our staff in a service-oriented culture and replacement of outdated information technology.



Vision, Mission and Values

Our Vision is:

A province in which British Columbians in need are assisted to achieve their social and economic potential.

Our Mission is:

To focus on the customer by transforming the way we deliver services in employment and assistance, using effective and outcome based practices, and working in collaboration with ministries, other levels of government and service agencies.

Our Values are:

The ministry continues to be guided by the British Columbia Public Service's core values of integrity, fiscal responsibility, accountability, respect and choice. These values are shared throughout government and efforts are made to ensure that they are demonstrated through all of the ministry's activities and interactions with clients, stakeholders, members of the public and staff.

Building on this foundation, the ministry has identified additional values that shape the design and delivery of our unique programs and services, including:

Personal responsibility — The ministry emphasizes personal responsibility by assisting clients who are able to work find employment and achieve independence. The ministry supports the efforts of clients who are working to enhance their self-reliance and involvement in their communities.

Active participation — Clients who are able to work are required to actively seek employment. The ministry supports these efforts with work search and job placement services, targeted employment training and tools such as employment plans. The ministry provides additional specialized supports to persons with disabilities to maximize their self-reliance.

Dignity and Respect — In order to uphold the principles of dignity and respect, the ministry commits to treating all members of the public with equity and fairness. The ministry does this through communicating in an open manner, building effective relationships and maintaining high ethical standards.

Innovative partnerships — Strong partnerships are integral to providing quality and sustainable services. The ministry continues to develop creative and innovative ways of working with a range of service providers and external agencies, as well as directly with clients.

Citizen confidence — The ministry strives to maintain public confidence in ministry programs and services, which is fundamental to realizing the long-term objective of providing a sustainable income assistance system that provides for those most in need.

Fairness and transparency — The ministry functions under the principles of administrative fairness and transparency by informing clients of the reasons a decision is made and providing access to a fair and impartial review of the original decision through reconsiderations and appeals.

Clear outcomes — The ministry sets clear outcomes, whether in the form of well-defined goals as outlined in this Service Plan, or client responsibilities as outlined in their employment plans. Clearly setting outcomes is pivotal to measuring the success of ministry programs and therefore, to improving upon business practices to enhance service delivery.

Accountability for results — The ministry is accountable to government and all British Columbians for results through performance management systems.

Over the next year, all ministry staff will be engaged in a broad-based review of these and other organizational values. Staff will also be provided with opportunities to participate in the development of a new:

- Service Code: Establishing clear expectations of how our shared values should be operationalized into our decision-making processes and daily activities.
- Service Standards: Defining specific targets, including descriptions of what services clients should expect to receive and how they should be provided. Service Standards will, where possible, be benchmarked to comparable organizations. These Standards would be shared with clients and our ongoing adherence to these commitments would be monitored and shared publicly.

Collectively, these client service initiatives will guide all of our daily activities and provide a basis for evaluating our performance in delivering services and conduct when interacting with clients, ministry staff and other stakeholders.

Strategic Context

To effectively and responsibly deliver services that assist those most in need and move people from assistance to employment, the ministry must be responsive to the context in which it operates. Currently, the ministry operates in a context that is shaped by:

- Demographic shifts associated with an aging population: Natural population growth and migration into the province increase demand for the ministry's employment and disability assistance programs.
- A growing number of persons with disabilities requiring assistance: An increase in PWD clients is anticipated due in part to longer life expectancy for children with disabilities and individuals with significant health issues, increasing proportion of population more prone to illnesses as it ages, and the impact of serious illnesses and conditions (such as HIV/AIDS, Hep-C, and drug and alcohol dependencies).
- Public expectations of the ministry: Members of the public continue to expect government services that are responsive, professional, inclusive, cost-effective, transparent, accountable and fiscally sustainable.

These factors have a significant impact on the ministry's operations, caseloads and ultimately, achievement of its goals and performance targets. Within this context, the ministry will pursue external opportunities and leverage internal strengths to both mitigate risks to the ministry and its clients and support continuous improvement in the delivery of services.

Internal

A number of internal opportunities are available to the ministry and will be pursued including:

- Enhanced Client Capacity: Ministry employment programs will continue to support the transition of clients from assistance to sustainable employment through results-based partnerships with external service providers.
- Focus on Persons with Disabilities: The ministry will continue to assist clients with disabilities through income assistance and employment and volunteer programs. The involvement of clients in these programs enhances their independence and provides important benefits to the communities in which they live.
- Citizen-Centred Service Delivery: The ministry will build upon its citizen-centred culture by working with staff to design services that are coordinated and meet evolving client needs. New and existing programs will be reviewed with a focus on service enhancements, greater consistency in the delivery of services across the province, efficient allocation of resources and increasing the time available for staff to assist clients. Implementation of the Integrated Service Delivery initiative, Multi-Channel

Service Delivery and Service Code and Standards initiatives build upon these service attributes through streamlined business processes and improved tools and job aids.

- Enhanced Business Administration: The ministry will continue to improve its internal operations and delivery of services through the adoption of best practices in the areas of strategic planning, project and performance management, continuous improvement initiatives and caseload forecasting.
- Expanded Technologies: Expanded use of information and communication technologies offers the potential to improve the timeliness, consistency and cost-effectiveness of services and information provided to clients. Potential initiatives include the expanded use of direct deposit of assistance payments to clients, and streamlined application processes.
- Dedicated Staff: Members of the ministry have consistently demonstrated a high degree of dedication, professionalism and flexibility in carrying out their responsibilities. Their continued support and expertise has been, and will continue to be, critical to the success of the ministry and its clients.

The ministry will also be addressing several internal challenges including:

- Stewardship of Resources: British Columbians recognize that public sector resources are finite and they expect the ministry to prudently manage its programs and services within our budget allocations. Potential pressures resulting from changes in caseload and cost drivers such as increased medical equipment costs will be managed through effective forecasting, adoption of new technologies and streamlining where appropriate.
- Recruitment and Retention: Faced with the pressures of an aging workforce, the ministry is required to compete with other public and private sector organizations to attract and retain highly-skilled and motivated staff. Over the next three years, the ministry will continue to develop internal leadership candidates, target skilled positions and maintain succession plans for critical positions.
- Privacy of Personal Information: A global increase in attacks on information systems necessitates the maintenance of strict security standards to protect the large volume of client information required to deliver basic services. Maintaining the security and integrity of personal information is critical to both the operations of the ministry and the privacy rights of our clients.
- Workplace Safety: Organizations serving the public face the risk of workplace violence. A safe environment for both staff and clients is a top priority. Accordingly, the ministry will continue to support initiatives such as workplace safety planning and training and development of a consolidated incident reporting and tracking system.

External

The ministry is also positioning itself to benefit from the following external opportunities:

- Collaboration and Partnerships: The ministry will continue to build new partnerships with other ministries, the federal government, local municipalities and stakeholder groups

to deliver flexible, cost-effective and innovative services. Among the initiatives currently underway are pilots throughout British Columbia addressing mental health, addiction services and homelessness.

  - Revived Provincial Economy: The BC economy grew 3.8 per cent in 2005, stronger than the 3.3 per cent expected at the start of last year, according to BC's independent Economic Forecast Council. The Council now expects the strong economic performance to continue in BC, with growth of 3.6 per cent expected for 2006. Further information on the BC outlook may be found in the *Budget and Three Year Fiscal Plan* released with the budget.

- The ministry also faces external challenges that could significantly influence our ability to achieve the goals and objectives detailed in this Service Plan. While these challenges cannot be eliminated, the ministry has adopted a number of strategies to minimize or mitigate their impact.
  - Economic Shocks: The provincial economy is the largest single determinate of the ministry's caseload and expenditures. Accordingly, economic fluctuations or unexpected shocks (e.g., avian flu, mountain pine beetle, fire storms, trade disputes) that pose risks to the provincial economy and regional labour markets may also impact ministry operations and fiscal targets. The ministry mitigates this risk through conservative forecasting and ongoing monitoring of our caseload and operations.
  - Crystal Meth: The rapid growth of crystal meth use represents a significant and growing threat to the physical and mental well-being of ministry clients and their families. The effects of this highly addictive, inexpensive, and readily available drug are experienced by our front line staff through a growing caseload of addicted clients. We will work with the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, as the lead ministry on this important cross ministry initiative, to determine the scope and impact of crystal meth use among ministry clients.
  - Catastrophic Events: Potential catastrophic events, such as an earthquake, pose significant risks to the continued delivery of critical assistance programs. Risk assessments and updates to the ministry's Business Continuation Plan continue to be developed.

Each of the above risks and opportunities has the potential to significantly impact the ability of the ministry to achieve our mission and goals. Accordingly, all areas of the ministry will continue to monitor their potential influences and will revise strategies and plans that minimize or mitigate risks while pursuing internal and external opportunities. A critical element in this ongoing approach is the expansion of Enterprise-wide Risk Management (ERM) throughout the ministry. ERM provides the ministry with a disciplined approach to the identification, analysis, monitoring and reporting of risks and opportunities at all levels of the organization.

Core Business Areas

The ministry's major services are provided under the BC Employment and Assistance (BCEA) program, which emphasizes self-reliance and personal responsibility, and reduces long-term dependence on income assistance for those who are able to work. BCEA programs and services are all delivered through six core business areas, each of which is directly tied to the ministry's vision, mission and goals.

Core Business: Employment Programs

Employment Programs provides for the operation and administration of programs to assist eligible individuals find sustainable employment. It also provides for the operation and administration of employment-related programs to support individuals with multiple barriers and disabilities. This sub-vote provides for salaries and benefits for individuals with disabilities receiving on the job training under the Public Service Employment Program. Recoveries are received from ministries and from parties external to government under cost sharing agreements for programs.

The ministry designs and develops employment programs for clients that include work search assistance, employment planning assistance, specific skills training, job placement and job retention services. To ensure that assistance is available to all clients, the ministry also offers clients assistance including transportation, work clothing and certification fees in cases where programming gaps may exist (for example in rural and remote communities).

The ministry also offers programs to support persons with disabilities enhance their participation in the community and the work force through employment and volunteer opportunities. This program enhances participants' sense of well-being, promotes their inclusion in the community and the workforce, and builds skills and experience that may lead to further employment or volunteer opportunities. Participation in these programs is voluntary.

Employment programming is delivered through community-based, external service providers. Service providers are selected using a procurement and performance-based contract management process designed to ensure the selection process is fair, transparent and accountable. Those proponents who are successful in the competitive contracting process have been assessed against evaluation criteria and identified as the service providers best able to perform the work. Compensation is based partly on their ability to achieve specified client outcomes.

Client scenario: Rachel is a single mother who had been receiving income assistance since 1995. She had never held a paying job and described herself as having low self-esteem and no confidence that anyone would ever hire her. As part of her employment plan, Rachel participated in a ministry program. Rachel successfully completed the program and now works part-time as a sales clerk as well as an on-call housekeeper. She is confident her retail sales position will soon be full-time. In Rachel's words, "My experience of (the Training For Jobs program) has been an inspiration... I never thought I would get off the system. This program has changed my life for the better. I am now working 2 jobs and am no longer in need of income assistance."*

**Name has been changed to protect client privacy*

Core Business: Temporary Assistance

Temporary assistance is provided in accordance with the *Employment and Assistance Act* for the family units of eligible individuals who are capable of financial independence through employment or are unable to seek work because of a prescribed short-term medical or other condition, or who have persistent multiple barriers to employment. It also provides for support services and direct operating costs. Recoveries are received from ministries, assignments authorized by the *Employment and Assistance Act* and the *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act*, and from repayable assistance and overpayments.

The *Employment and Assistance Act* sets out criteria the ministry uses to determine eligibility for temporary assistance. Temporary assistance includes income support and shelter allowances for those with accommodation expenses. Clients experiencing difficulties, such as mental illness, addictions or developmental disabilities, can request that the ministry provide their shelter allowances directly to their landlord to avoid loss, misuse or misappropriation of their funds. The group of clients who primarily benefit from temporary assistance are those in the Expected to Work category.

Expected to Work: This group of clients includes individuals who are capable of employment, have met eligibility criteria such as a three-week work search and have ongoing employment-related obligations. Expected to Work clients have to maintain individualized employment plans detailing specific job search activities commitments as a condition of continued assistance. Research indicates that this approach benefits families and individuals over the long-term by breaking the inter-generational cycle of welfare dependency and ending the 'cycle-on, cycle-off' pattern that many clients have experienced. Expected to Work clients comprise 17 per cent of the ministry's caseload.

There are circumstances where clients may be temporarily exempt or excused from employment obligations. These clients form the following two groups:

- Expected to Work — Medical Condition: The ministry recognizes that some clients may be unable to work due to short-term medical conditions or participation in a rehabilitation program. These clients are temporarily exempt from employment obligations and represent 7 per cent of the ministry's caseload.
- Expected to Work — Temporarily Excused: Clients may also be temporarily excused from normal eligibility requirements if they: are parents of children under three years of age; are caring for a dependent child or spouse with serious physical or mental conditions; have recently left an abusive relationship; or have reached 65 years of age. These clients comprise 7 per cent of the ministry's caseload.

Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers (PPMB): Clients may be designated as PPMB if they are unable to achieve financial independence due to specific barriers to employment that they have been unable to overcome. Barriers may include a medical condition that precludes employment and is likely to continue or a long-term medical condition in addition to poor literacy skills, child care needs, lack of training or work experience. While designated as PPMB, clients receive temporary assistance and are temporarily exempt from employment obligations. PPMB clients make up 8 per cent of the ministry's caseload.

Children in the Home of a Relative: Relatives who are looking after a child placed in their care by a parent unable to pay for their basic needs may be eligible for financial assistance from the ministry. In addition to the ministry's support, caregivers may also be eligible for the Canada Child Tax Benefit and BC Family Bonus. While the decision to place a child with a relative is solely the parent's, the ministry continues to ensure our staff are provided with training and policies to assist them in detecting and reporting, to the Ministry of Children and Family Development, issues of child safety or other concerns. CIHR clients represent 5 per cent of the ministry caseload.

The ministry has worked to ensure that temporary assistance is available and responsive to individuals and families truly in need. Individuals with an emergency medical need or an emergency need for food or shelter and who do not have alternate resources available, can have their application for assistance reviewed on an expedited basis.

Client scenario: Sarah is a former sex trade worker who sought help through the ministry to move into the mainstream labour market. She completed a Bridging Employment Program and spent six months working part-time in two training positions. While doing that work she upgraded her high-school English and was accepted at a local community college to become a Community Service Worker and plans to work with people with mental handicaps. She reconciled with her family, volunteers and is a spokesperson for a local organization.*

**Name has been changed to protect client privacy*

Core Business: Disability Assistance

Disability assistance is provided in accordance with the *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act* for the family units of eligible individuals with disabilities who are not expected to gain financial independence through employment or who are seeking work. It also provides for support services and direct operating costs. Recoveries are received from ministries, assignments authorized by the *Employment and Assistance Act* and the *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act*, and from repayable assistance and overpayments.

Income and disability assistance legislation and ministry policies recognize that people with disabilities face unique challenges in daily living and may require additional support. Clients may apply for a "Persons with Disabilities" (PWD) designation by submitting an application form that has been filled out by their physician and other health professionals with details concerning diagnosis, health history, the degree of impairment and impact on the applicant's daily living activities. Applicants may be designated as PWD if their medical history demonstrates they have a severe physical or mental impairment that significantly restricts their ability to carry out daily living activities. Clients receiving disability assistance are eligible for increased income support and shelter allowances, a low-cost annual bus pass, a monthly earnings exemption and enhanced medical coverage which includes Medical Services Plan and Pharmacare coverage with no deductible, as well as other health supplements.

In addition to disability assistance, the ministry also offers PWD clients programs designed to increase independence, provide greater income security, promote increased participation in the community and enhance well-being. These programs are part of the Employment Strategy for Persons with Disabilities, an overarching, integrated approach to employment. This strategy provides integrated assessment, employment planning, job training, and employment services and supports to enable persons with disabilities to gain or enhance employment to the greatest degree possible. Participation in these programs is voluntary, as clients receiving disability assistance have no employment-related obligations or requirements to participate in employment programs.

Persons with disabilities who successfully leave assistance for employment retain their PWD designation and are eligible to maintain their medical assistance. PWD clients represent 56 per cent of the ministry caseload.

Client scenario: Joel is a PWD client who was diagnosed with schizophrenia many years ago. As a result of the disease, he had little experience in paid employment and was doubtful an employer would hire him. After 17 years of volunteering for non-profit organizations, Joel chose to participate in Employment Programming for Persons with Disabilities to gain work experience in a commercial environment. Through the program, he began to volunteer at a garden centre and was responsible for stocking the shop, watering plants, pricing and responding to customer enquiries.*

Staff at the garden centre appreciated Joel's plant knowledge and encouraged him to apply for a position as a customer associate. As a result of this successful experience, Joel's confidence in his abilities solidified, allowing him to face his next working challenge with a more secure foundation and awareness of his strengths and skills.

**Name has been changed to protect client privacy*

Core Business: Supplementary Assistance

Supplementary assistance provides for health and other supports for family units of eligible individuals in accordance with the *Employment and Assistance Act* and *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act*, and for programs that promote the purposes of the legislation. It also provides for support services and direct operating costs. Recoveries are received from Bus Pass Program user fees, from assignments authorized by the *Employment and Assistance Act* and the *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act*, from repayable assistance and overpayments.

Supplementary assistance provides eligible clients with additional assistance for expenses related to health and medical needs, emergency food and shelter, transportation costs, some moving costs, employment-related expenses and other specified expenses. Supplementary assistance includes:

- Subsidized bus passes for low-income seniors and persons with disabilities;
- Burial or cremation expenses;
- Dental and optical services for clients' prescribed needs and for eligible children through the Healthy Kids program;
- Employment-related expenses including work clothes, recognition of foreign credentials, language training, moving expenses to accept confirmed employment, transportation, books and supplies;
- Fees for residential care facilities;
- Fees to obtain specified identification documents;
- Maintenance for registered guide dog used by a recipient or their dependent;
- Medical equipment and supplies;
- Medical Services Program premiums;

- Medical transportation (such as flights from remote locations for medical treatments);
- Moving expenses if the client has confirmed employment in a new community or their physical safety is at risk;
- Natal supplements, monthly diet and nutritional supplements; and,
- User fees for drug and alcohol treatment programs.

Client scenario: Joe, Pam* and their 2 children were living in a small town in northern BC. Joe lost his job at the mill and the store Pam worked in closed down. She was eventually able to find work in a local tavern, but then became seriously ill and had not worked enough hours to qualify for sick leave benefits. Through supplementary assistance, the ministry was able to assist with Pam's prescription drug costs. MEIA also helped the family pay overdue utility bills to prevent heat and electricity from being disconnected. Because there was little opportunity to find employment in their small town, the ministry offered support with moving costs. Joe found a permanent full-time job in another community with an employer who assured a job would also be available for Pam. MEIA's assistance with moving expenses allowed the family to achieve financial independence and a fresh start in a new community.*

**Name has been changed to protect client privacy*

Core Business: Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal

The Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal is a single-level, regionally based appeal system established under the *Employment and Assistance Act*.

To ensure that individual eligibility decisions are consistent, transparent and fair, BCEA clients may request a review of ministry decisions through an impartial and responsive reconsideration and appeal system. If a client is dissatisfied with a decision, they may request a reconsideration. If the client remains unsatisfied with the reconsideration decision, they may appeal to the independent Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal.

The mission of the Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal is to provide an accessible appeal process that delivers timely and fair decisions. The Appeal Tribunal is structured as an independent public body to ensure unbiased, fair and transparent decision-making. The Appeal Tribunal's Chair and Vice-Chairs are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor, and the Appeal Tribunal members are recruited throughout the province and appointed by the Minister. Regional representation, including representation from smaller and rural communities ensures the decisions are reflective of the province as a whole. Appeal hearings occur throughout the province. Although most hearings are in-person, the appeals may also occur by teleconference, or if both parties agree, through written submission to the tribunal. This flexibility ensures all clients have access to the appeal process, regardless of where they reside.

Core Business: Executive and Support Services

Executive and Support Services provide for the office of the Minister of Employment and Income Assistance as well as executive direction of the ministry and administrative services for the operating programs of the ministry. This includes: strategic and business planning, financial administration and budget co-ordination, human resources, asset and risk management, information technology, records management, freedom of information, and protection of privacy. It also provides for corporate and community-based service delivery, including services provided by ministries and agencies on behalf of the ministry. Costs are recovered from ministries and from parties external to government for services provided for in this sub-vote.

Key services include direct service delivery, strategic advice and direction, legislative and policy support, planning and performance management, research and economic analysis, internal communications, information management, strategic human resources and risk management.

Resource Summary

Core Business Areas	2005/06 Restated Estimates[1]	2006/07 Estimates	2007/08 Plan	2008/09 Plan
Operating Expenses ($000)				
Employment Programs	101,355	93,116	93,116	93,116
Temporary Assistance	399,705	373,222	367,974	369,904
Disability Assistance	633,607	669,229	701,929	715,929
Supplementary Assistance	195,431	209,983	212,385	213,885
Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal	1,819	2,019	2,019	2,019
Executive and Support Services	21,416	21,846	21,570	21,570
Total	**1,353,333**	**1,369,415**	**1,398,993**	**1,416,423**
Full-time Equivalents (FTEs)				
Employment Programs	302	302	302	302
Temporary Assistance	514	514	514	514
Disability Assistance	592	592	592	592
Supplementary Assistance	312	312	312	312
Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal	14	14	14	14
Executive and Support Services	239	239	239	239
Total	**1,973**	**1,973**	**1,973**	**1,973**
Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) ($000)				
Executive and Support Services	17,507	18,000	17,595	22,725
Total	**17,507**	**18,000**	**17,595**	**22,725**

[1] These amounts have been restated, for comparative purposes only, to be consistent with the presentation of the 2006/07 *Estimates*. Schedule A of the *Estimates* presents a detailed reconciliation.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Results

Ministry Goals

The ministry's goals described in this section are multi-year commitments that are consistent with the ministry's mandate and vision, and are reflective of our responsibility for the delivery of income assistance, disability assistance and employment programs for British Columbians in need. Establishment of this strategic direction allows the ministry to set clear priorities, ensuring that effort at every level of the organization is aligned and focused on common results.

Ministry planning is a continuous activity involving all areas of the ministry. Members of the ministry's executive and management teams meet regularly throughout the year to systematically evaluate the ministry's direction against client and stakeholder feedback, organizational performance and emerging strategic issues as part of ongoing risk management processes. When appropriate, the ministry adjusts its activities accordingly to reflect necessary changes.

Linkage to the Five Great Goals

The Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance plays a critical role in the achievement of four of government's Five Great Goals. Our programs and services directly contribute to government's commitment to build the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities, those with special needs, children at risk and seniors. We also play an indirect role supporting other great goals including: making British Columbia the best educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent; leading the way in North America in healthy living and physical fitness; and creation of more jobs per capita than anywhere else in Canada.

Great Goal	Supporting Initiatives
1. Make B.C. the best educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent.	Employment programming and school start-up supplement.
2. Lead the way in North America in healthy living and physical fitness.	Income and shelter assistance; extended medical coverage; Healthy Kids offering dental and optical services; medical equipment and supplies; nutritional supplements, funding for drug and alcohol treatment and activity fee supplements.

3. Build the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities, those with special needs, children at risk and seniors.	The third highest disability support rate in Canada; employment programming for persons with disabilities; subsidized bus passes for low-income persons with disabilities and seniors; and the senior's supplement.
5. To create more jobs per capita than anywhere else in Canada.	Employment programming and funding for employment-related expenses including work clothes and moving expenses to accept confirmed employment.

Cross Ministry Initiatives

The Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance recognizes that to effect real change in the lives of our clients we need to work closely with partner ministries, organizations and other levels of government. Shared responsibility requires shared solutions. Accordingly, over the next three years the ministry will continue to partner on the following cross-government initiatives:

Cross Ministry Initiative *[lead ministry in italics]*	**Supporting Strategies**
Disability Strategy *Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance and Ministry of Health*	Provide a leadership role in the development of a flexible disability strategy that assists persons with disabilities achieve greater independence, security of income and enhanced well-being. Key areas of focus include measurable improvements in the integration of government services and responsiveness in meeting the needs of persons with disabilities.
Children's Agenda (Children and Youth with Special Needs) *Ministry of Children and Family Development and Ministry of Health*	Improve health outcomes and physical fitness among children in low income families through the provision of dental and eye care supports, sports camp fees, school start-up assistance and natal supplements.
Crystal Meth *Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General*	Work with partners to develop strategies to prevent and mitigate the effects of crystal meth on our clients and their families.
ActNow *Ministry of Health*	Encourage improved physical fitness and wellness among clients and children in low-income families through the provision of camp fees, Healthy Kids dental coverage, and natal supplements.

Cross Ministry Initiative *[lead ministry in italics]*	**Supporting Strategies**
Literacy *Ministry of Education*	Develop a Joint Skills Training and Post-Secondary Education Strategy that meets the needs of British Columbians.
First Nations *Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation*	Collaborate with the federal government, other ministries and community stakeholders to expand Aboriginal employment partnerships and programming initiatives. The ministry will also implement an Aboriginal Self-Identifier initiative that will allow clients to voluntarily indicate their Aboriginal status as a basis for designing services and programs that better meet their needs.
Mental Health and Addictions *Ministry of Health*	Support development of an Inter-ministry Strategy for Mentally Disordered Offenders and implement a Triage Pilot in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside to support persons with mental health and addiction issues.
Housing and Homelessness *Office of Housing and Construction Standards*	Assist the Premier's Task Force on Homelessness, Mental Health and Addictions develop comprehensive supports for British Columbia's most vulnerable. Other activities include continued involvement in the Vancouver Agreement supporting economic, social and community development and regional Outreach programs.
Seniors *Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Community Services*	Continue to provide low-income seniors with the senior's supplement and a range of direct assistance and supplements that meet their needs. Support development of the BC 211 initiative, which will provide free telephone and web access to non-emergency social, health and government service information and referrals.
2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games *Ministry of Economic Development*	Work with government agencies, businesses and communities across the province to identify ways in which persons with disabilities can be linked with job and volunteer opportunities offered by the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

Performance Plan

This section presents the ministry's goals, objectives, strategies and key performance measures detailing our strategic direction, organizational performance and intended outcomes. Additional information on each performance measure is available in a web-based supplement to this Service Plan at:

http://www.eia.gov.bc.ca/sp/

Goal 1: *Deliver responsive, innovative and effective services to clients in need.*

Core Business Areas: ***Employment Programs, Temporary Assistance, Disability Assistance, Supplementary Assistance, Executive and Support Services.***

The ministry continues to make every effort to ensure that British Columbians in need have access to quality service and are treated with dignity and respect. Ministry clients can expect to receive consistent, fair and responsive service across the province and regardless of the delivery channel used (e.g., local office, telephone, and growing use of Internet).

The ministry provides a wide range of services to our clients, including income and shelter supports, as well as employment programs for clients who are able to work. Clients with barriers to employment or persons with disabilities also have access to extended services, including supplementary assistance and special employment programs. The ministry engages in ongoing evaluations to maximize the effectiveness of our programs and services and respond to the unique and changing nature of our clients' needs.

Objective 1.1: *Clients receive appropriate and responsive income and supplementary assistance supports that meet their changing needs.*

The ministry operates local offices in communities across the province, where people in need can access information about services available through this ministry, other government agencies, and community organizations.

Advances in technology, including wider availability of the Internet, provide new opportunities to deliver information about the ministry's services online. In addition to accessing information in-person or online, people may also contact the ministry-operated call centre toll-free to ask questions or apply for assistance by telephone. By using one or a combination of these channels, enquirers and clients can access information, programs, and services in ways that suit their needs.

It is critical that the services the ministry provides be responsive to the unique needs of its clients. To ensure that client needs are being met, the ministry conducts regular reviews of its income assistance rates, regulations, policies and processes. Ongoing reviews of

income assistance rates and policies across Canada allow the ministry to monitor how British Columbia compares to other jurisdictions providing services to people in financial need.

Strategies:

- Implement Multi-Channel Service Delivery project, which improves consistency and choice in how and when customers access ministry's service and information.
- Launch public online resource providing access to streamlined policy and program information.
- Conduct annual income assistance rates review in the context of changing client needs.

Performance Measure	Baseline	Actual	Targets		
	2001/02	2005/06[1]	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
1.1 Per cent of BC population aged 19-64 receiving temporary assistance with employment-related obligations.	3.4%	0.97%	0.84%	0.80%	0.80%

[1] Result for April 2005 to December 2005.

Description of measure: Assisting clients to find employment is a critical aspect of the ministry's mission. Temporary assistance is provided to people who have employment-related obligations, and to those who are temporarily excused from seeking work (i.e., parents of a young child, clients with a temporary illness or injury requiring medical treatment). Measure 1.1 tracks the percentage of BC's working age population receiving temporary assistance. This measure is an indicator of the economic health of the province as well as the appropriate incentives that foster independence and improve outcomes for clients and their families. A lower percentage indicates that fewer people are in need of assistance and more are contributing to a strong and vibrant provincial economy.

Monitoring this measure at the community level enables the ministry to anticipate changes in demand for its services in communities across the province and develop programs that respond to client needs. The ministry expects this number will continue to decline as fewer British Columbians require income assistance due to a stronger economy and more jobs.

Objective 1.2: *Persons with disabilities who are unable to provide for their basic needs will receive the assistance they need and be supported in becoming as independent as possible.*

The ministry continues to support greater independence for persons with disabilities, founded upon financial security, enhanced well-being and full participation as members of the community. We recognize that persons with disabilities face unique challenges in daily living and may require supports for voluntary employment or continuous assistance.

In order to meet the unique challenges of clients designated as Persons with Disabilities (PWD), this client group receives the highest rate of assistance and the widest array of benefits available in British Columbia. The ministry is committed to maintaining both the recent $70 per month increase for disability assistance and growth of the allowable earnings exemption. As a result of these increases, PWD clients may receive a monthly income (made up of a combination of income assistance and earnings) of more than $1,350.

Additional supports available to clients receiving disability assistance include low-cost bus passes and enhanced medical coverage — such as Medical Services Plan coverage, Pharmacare, extended dental and optical insurance and medical supplies.

The ministry also offers a range of specialized employment services and pre-employment supports that allow persons with disabilities to pursue volunteer and employment opportunities, as they are able. These include job training and placement, technical equipment, adaptive accommodations and follow-up workplace support. PWD clients who want to work may also receive assistance developing an Employment Plan that outlines the supports they require to be successful in a volunteer or job placement. Disability assistance rates are not affected by a client's ability to work or their participation in an employment training program or placement.

Strategies:

- Supporting employment, volunteerism and community engagement among Persons with Disabilities through employment and increased funding for the Community Volunteers Supplement.
- Enhance service delivery options such as Internet to better accommodate the needs of Persons with Disabilities.

Performance Measure	Baseline	Actual	Targets		
	2001/02	2005/06[1]	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
1.2 Per cent of total caseload in receipt of disability assistance.	29.6%	54.2%	56.4%	58.4%	60%

[1] Result for April 2005 to December 2005.

Description of measure: Measure 1.2 tracks the percentage of the total caseload receiving disability assistance. As the number of clients receiving temporary assistance declines (i.e., demonstrating success in finding employment) the proportion of the total caseload receiving disability assistance increases. The ministry monitors this measure to anticipate future trends in the ministry's caseload and emerging trends in needs of clients with disabilities. Projected increases in the PWD caseload is reflective of an aging population and increased life expectancy due to improved medical treatments.

Objective 1.3: *Deliver quality client-centric services that are consistent, respectful, innovative and accountable.*

The ministry continues to implement strategies to build a customer-focused culture and service delivery. Foundational to this model are clear values and meaningful service standards developed through collaboration with ministry staff and community partners. Over the next year, the ministry will develop a Service Code which will define Service Standards upon which our performance will be evaluated. These Service Standards will ensure clients and stakeholders throughout the province consistently receive quality service in interactions with the ministry. The ministry intends to introduce the Service Code and Service Standards in 2006/07.

Strategies:

- Clarify organizational values.
- Develop a Service Code and Service Standards which specify the kind of service clients can expect from the ministry.

Performance Measure	Targets		
	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
1.3 Per cent of ministry services provided to clients that meet or exceed established service standards.	Establish baseline	Exceed baseline	Exceed baseline

Description of measure: This measure is currently under development.

Objective 1.4: *Individuals have access to a fair and timely reconsideration and appeal process.*

Clients have the right to request a reconsideration of ministry decisions. This is an internal ministry process — 'a second look' — that is separate from the external appeal process. Clients can apply to Reconsideration Adjudicators to review the ministry's decision. Ifunsatisfied with this decision, a client may appeal further to the Employment and Assistance Tribunal office. As part of its commitment to fairness and administrative justice, the ministry ensures that all clients are aware of their rights and appeal options. The reconsideration and appeal process is designed to be accessible to all clients, including clients with limited resources or special needs as well as those residing in rural or remote locations.

Performance Measure	Baseline	Actual	Targets		
	2003/04	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
1.4 Per cent of reconsideration decisions that are made within 10 business days.	81.9%	74.4%	88%	90%	90%

Description of measure: A higher percentage for this measure indicates the ministry is doing a better job of meeting regulatory requirements and providing timely and efficient service to clients. Adjudication of health decisions represents a large proportion of the reconsideration requests that the ministry undertakes annually. Significant increases in the number of complex health reconsiderations have impacted the ministry results for 2005/06. The ministry will continue to refine its processes and work with medical service providers to improve the efficiency and timeliness of reconsiderations.

Goal 2: *Provide low-income persons with disabilities with the best system of supports in Canada.*

Core Business Areas: *Disability Assistance, Supplementary Assistance and Employment Programs.*

The ministry envisions a province in which those British Columbians in need are assisted to achieve their social and economic potential. Services for persons with disabilities provided by the ministry directly support government's goal of building "the best system of supports in Canada for persons with disabilities and those with special needs".

Providing opportunities for persons with disabilities benefits both individuals and their communities. That is why the ministry is taking a leadership role in developing cross ministry strategies that support goal three of the government's Five Great Goals.

Those British Columbians on income assistance who have a disability can apply for the persons with disabilities designation. This designation is given under the *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act*. The Act recognizes that persons with disabilities may require additional supports, including a higher assistance rate, supplementary assistance and specialized supports to employment.

Performance Measure	Baseline	Actual	Targets		
	2005/06	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
2.0 Average time required for decision on a new application for Persons With Disabilities designation.	8.9 weeks	8.9 weeks	8.0 weeks	7.5 weeks	7.0 weeks

Description of measure: This measure evaluates the ministry's performance in the review and adjudication of applications for designation as a person with a disability. Determining

eligibility for designation as a person with a disability is a complex and often time-intensive process, requiring the review of detailed medical evidence and a close examination of all case materials. The Persons with Disabilities Designation Application includes detailed information from the applicant's physician and other health professionals on diagnosis, health history, the degree of impairment and its impact on the applicant's daily living activities. The length of the adjudication process reflects the commitment to reaching fair and consistent decisions that comply with legislative requirements and the principles of administrative fairness. A triage process allows the ministry to identify cases that involve urgent medical situations or children with disabilities, requiring expedited adjudication.

A shorter timeframe for this measure indicates that clients are receiving more timely and efficient service. Future year targets anticipate continual improvements in performance and these time-frames may be accelerated.

Objective 2.1: *Persons with disabilities who seek employment or volunteer opportunities are supported through the integrated Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities.*

Many persons with disabilities want and are able to contribute to their community through volunteer work or paid employment. A successful strategy for improving independence for persons with disabilities must consider the full spectrum of programs, services and supports required to address the needs of persons with disabilities. It should recognize that individuals experience disabilities in different degrees and at different stages of their lives, and that their needs will vary over time.

Part-time work and volunteering are valuable activities for many clients who are receiving disability assistance and are not able to fully support themselves through full-time employment. Part-time work may be a stepping-stone to full-time employment and volunteer work may lead to employment, as it often provides valuable skills and experience. Volunteering is an opportunity for clients to contribute to their communities, reduce social isolation through enhanced relationships with others and lead enriched lives. Volunteering may also help PWD clients increase economic security as they are eligible to receive a monthly volunteer supplement.

To meet the needs of persons with disabilities who wish to work or volunteer, the ministry provides a range of employment services and pre-employment supports such as job training and placement, technical equipment, adaptive accommodations and follow-up workplace support. One of the biggest barriers that persons with disabilities face is social isolation. Volunteering and employment helps break down those barriers and enriches clients' lives and enhances community participation.

To further support PWD clients to achieve greater financial independence while increasing involvement in their communities, the ministry has increased earning exemptions for clients receiving disability assistance. Earning exemptions combined with disability assistance provides the opportunity for clients to receive a monthly income of approximately $1,350 per month.

Strategy:

- Deliver an effective and integrated Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities.

Performance Measure	Baseline	Actual	Targets		
	2001/02	2005/06[1]	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
2.1 Percentage of persons receiving disability assistance with income from working or a volunteer supplement.	13.6%	15.6%	15.7%	15.8%	16.0%

[1] Result based on April 2005 to December 2005 data.

Description of measure: This measure tracks the number of clients receiving disability assistance who have recorded earned income and volunteer supplements. An increase in this measure indicates improved community participation, independence and employability among persons with disabilities.

Objective 2.2: *Minister's Council on Employment for Persons with Disabilities continues to remove barriers to employment for persons with disabilities through partnerships with business and industry throughout the province.*

Research shows that persons with disabilities have the same high levels of education as other employees. There are about 300,000 working-age British Columbians with disabilities of which 34,000 have college diplomas, 30,000 have trade certificates and 28,000 have university degrees.

An important initiative the ministry is undertaking to support greater employment opportunities for persons with disabilities is our continued support for WorkAble Solutions. Under the auspices of the Minister's Council on Employment for Persons with Disabilities, WorkAble Solutions is a cooperative effort between the B.C. Human Resources Management Association and the ministry, which brings together employers and people with disabilities. This innovative partnership has successfully taken its message regarding the benefits of an inclusive workplace directly to the province's largest employers. Building upon these relationships, WorkAble Solutions has provided research on disability and employment issues and developed resources such as an employers' handbook and an interactive job website.

Another opportunity to assist persons with disabilities is the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, which represent a unique chance for all British Columbians to experience world class sporting and cultural events. We will ensure that participation in this special event, including benefit from emerging direct and indirect employment opportunities, is available to all British Columbians, including persons with disabilities. The ministry is working with the Minister's Council on Employment for Persons with Disabilities, as well as employment programming service providers in communities across the province, to fully engage persons with disabilities in this unique opportunity.

Strategies:

- Improving linkages among persons with disabilities and the business community, businesses and community-based job placement agencies, and major disability income and service providers.
- Reviewing and refining the WorkAble Solutions website — an online resource for persons with disabilities, employers, and Human Resources professionals.
- Exploring ways to link clients receiving disability assistance with job and volunteer opportunities arising from the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

Objective 2.3: *Develop and implement a comprehensive and integrated system of supports and services for persons with disabilities.*

Government as outlined in its Strategic Plan has made development of a comprehensive and integrated system of supports and service for persons with disabilities a key priority. As an important step in the development of the system, the ministry will be working with other ministries and organizations to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to information on all available services and supports through a single point of contact. Cross ministry strategies will be developed to reduce the number of outstanding requests for assistive aids and devices to increase satisfaction in accessing programs and services.

Strategy:

- Implementation of a toll-free line providing coordinated and citizen-centred information on the disability supports and services offered by five ministries.

Goal 3: *Support integrated service delivery through cross ministry social, health, educational and employment services that provide disadvantaged British Columbians with supports that are accessible and responsive to their unique needs.*

Core Business Areas: *Employment Programs, Temporary Assistance, Disability Assistance, Supplementary Assistance and Executive and Support Services.*

The government is committed to excellence in providing a system of support for disadvantaged British Columbians, including persons with disabilities, those with special needs, children at risk and seniors. Transformation in the design and delivery of health, education and literacy, employment, shelter and assistance programs based on collaboration between ministries, other levels of government and community organizations is critical. These new partnerships offer the potential to enhance client satisfaction, maximize positive results from available resources and ultimately improve the outcomes of individuals and communities.

The ministry has an important role integrating the delivery of social, health, educational and employment services and remains committed to its success. One of our challenges will be to effectively identify and measure specific outcomes associated with this shift, due to the diversity of the initiatives to be undertaken and difficulties distinguishing the important contributions of partner organizations. Despite these issues, the ministry will continue to explore opportunities to develop outcome measures and will report on results as they become available. Specific initiatives and activities will also be monitored and reported in terms of their key deliverables in order to provide appropriate transparency and accountability for results.

Objective 3.1: ***Link clients with the Ministry of Health's ActNow initiative which addresses the risk factors of physical inactivity, tobacco use, obesity, poor nutrition and alcohol use during pregnancy.***

ActNow BC is a comprehensive health promotion program designed to support individuals and communities protect and improve their wellness. The ministry plays an important role in this initiative through improved supports to families with children at risk, including programs such as the Healthy Kids program. The Healthy Kids program recognizes basic dental care and vision as important determinants of overall health, and provides basic dental and optical care to low and moderate income families not already covered by insurance plans. Extending coverage to these families ensures that low-income working families have access to dental and optical coverage they otherwise could not afford.

The ministry also provides clients with supports that promote good nutrition and a physically active lifestyle, including natal nutritional supplements and camp fees for all clients, including children of income assistance clients and clients with disabilities.

Strategies:

- Improving physical fitness and wellness among clients and children in low income families through the provision of camp fees, natal nutritional supplements and Healthy Kids optical and dental coverage.
- Increasing awareness and accessibility of health-promotion programs to encourage financial independence for low and moderate income families who are not receiving income assistance, as well as eligible clients.

Objective 3.2: ***Contribute to government's effort to maximize the physical, intellectual, social and emotional potential of the province's children through the "Strong Start" program.***

Providing children with the opportunities to succeed requires the involvement of families, communities and all levels of government. In addition to providing higher income and disability assistance rates to clients with children, the ministry also supports non-parent caregivers through the Children in the Home of a Relative program. During the early years

of the child, the parent of a child under three is exempt from the requirement to seek employment as a condition of eligibility. Specialized supplementary assistance is also available to assist with the health, dental and educational needs of children.

Strategies:

- Continuing to provide higher rates of support to clients with children.
- Enhancing resources available to clients with children at the start of a school year.

Objective 3.3: *Provide homeless British Columbians with community-based support services in collaboration with the Premier's Task Force on Homelessness, Mental Illness and Addictions.*

In 2005, responsibility for the Emergency Shelter Program was transferred from the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance to the Ministry of Forests and Range and the Minister Responsible for Housing. By remaining actively involved with the Premier's Task Force on Homelessness, Mental Illness and Addictions, the ministry continues to support government's efforts to address these issues. The ministry plays a key role in helping people break the cycle of homelessness by supporting those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to move beyond temporary shelter to more secure housing, and gain greater self-reliance through employment.

In addition to regional initiatives addressing homelessness, mental illness and addictions, the ministry has also targeted resources to the challenges faced by the province's largest metropolitan centre. The ministry, local governments, other provincial public sector partners and the government of Canada are working collaboratively to promote Vancouver's urban development under the Vancouver Agreement. Ongoing advice, assistance and funding is provided by the ministry to the Vancouver Agreement which brings government partners, community organizations and businesses together in a coordinated strategy that promotes and supports sustainable economic, social and community development, particularly in the Downtown Eastside.

Strategies:

- Supporting the development and implementation of recommendations from the Premier's Task Force on Homelessness, Mental Health and Addictions.
- Expanding Outreach programs in communities, such as the Vancouver Downtown Eastside, to connect eligible clients with the services available to meet their needs.
- Partnering with the ministries of Health, Public Safety and Solicitor General, Attorney General, and Children and Family Development to develop an Inter-ministry Strategy for Mentally Disordered Offenders.
- Continuing to support the Vancouver Agreement.

Objective 3.4: ***Improve the employment and literacy supports available to Aboriginal people through collaboration with Aboriginal organizations and other ministry stakeholders, ministries and governments.***

The government is committed to fostering new working partnerships with Aboriginal people. In collaboration with Aboriginal leadership and organizations, resources will be used to identify social, educational and economic opportunities for Aboriginal people. These opportunities may include increased participation in Aboriginal education and literacy programs, and expanded access to new and existing employment opportunities.

Strategies:

- Supporting the Ministry of Advanced Education in the development of a joint Skills Training and Post-Secondary Education Strategy made for British Columbia.
- Utilizing information from the voluntary Aboriginal Self-identifier project to better serve our Aboriginal clients through improved program planning, research and service delivery.

Objective 3.5: ***Support the development of common systems and information sharing among social sector ministries to improve service delivery and enhance client outcomes.***

Our clients are diverse and frequently require the services and supports provided by other ministries such as Health, Children and Family Development, and Education. Better meeting these needs through responsive and individualized services is dependent upon government's ability to share, manage and protect client information. Ultimately, new inter-ministry data sharing processes, that respect the confidential nature of personal information and comply with information and privacy legislation, are critical for developing effective integrated programs and ensuring that clients receive better service from government.

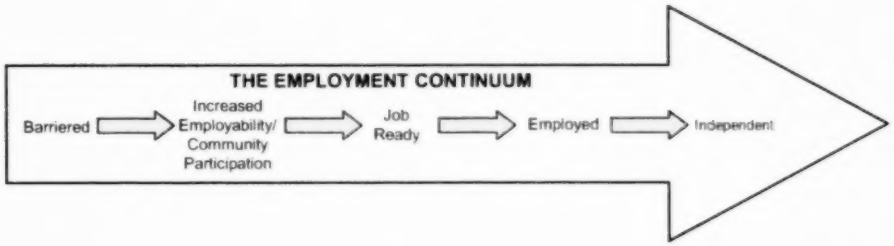
Strategies:

- Exploring opportunities to integrate systems and share essential client information with partner ministries to improve client service and outcomes.
- Ongoing monitoring of information and systems to ensure proper safeguards and appropriate usage of personal information as well as strict adherence to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Goal 4: *Introduce new employment programming that is flexible in meeting individual client needs to achieve sustainable employment.*

Core Business Areas: *Employment Programs.*

Employment programming will remain a key priority for the ministry over the next three years. Employment programs are intended to assist clients to move along the Employment Continuum towards independence as shown below:



Previous employment programs, such as the Job Placement Program and the Training for Jobs Program, have been successful. However, the nature and size of the ministry's caseload have changed significantly since these programs were introduced. The proportion and number of clients with employment obligations has declined significantly since June 2001 due to strong economic growth, improved employment opportunities and an increase in the number of Persons with Disabilities.

The ministry will be introducing new employment programming in 2006 in response to the changes in the client caseload. The new programming will also incorporate opportunities for improvement identified by the ministry through the following processes:

- An in-depth program evaluation for the Job Placement and Training for Jobs Programs;
- Internal administrative reviews;
- 'Best practices' research; and
- A thorough consultation process with service providers, front-line ministry staff and other stakeholders during August and September 2005.

The two key components of the new programming will be:

- The BC Employment Program — a single employment program to assist clients who are able to work to move into independence through sustainable employment; and
- A revised Community Assistance Program which will provide services to those clients who are more barriered in order to enhance their quality of life and support them to participate more fully in their communities.

Both programs will be designed to ensure that there is a high degree of flexibility available to contracted service providers so that they can tailor services to meet the needs of individual clients. Services and resources will also be managed in the most effective and accountable manner.

Performance Measure	Actual	Targets		
4.1 Average percentage of clients with employment related obligations who leave the caseload each month.	**2005/06**	**2006/07**	**2007/08**	**2008/09**
	Establish baseline	Exceed baseline	Exceed baseline	Exceed baseline

Description of Measure: This measure gauges the success of clients in achieving financial independence. As clients with employment obligations find jobs or alternatives to assistance and are successful in leaving income assistance, the proportion of the caseload with employment obligations will decline and the actual percentages will gradually decrease.

Objective 4.1: *Job ready clients will be assisted to reach independence as quickly as possible.*

Clients who are able to work will be supported to achieve financial independence through a rapid transition to work through services under the BC Employment Program. Based on their individual needs and opportunities in the local labour market, clients will access a range of supports including life skills, short-term skills development, pre-employment preparation (e.g., resume writing, access to job banks), job placement assistance and follow-up supports once employed.

Strategy:

- Implement the BC Employment Program.

Objective 4.2: *Invest in clients with barriers to advance progress towards sustainable employment.*

Some of our more barriered clients may never achieve and/or sustain financial independence through employment. These clients will be able to access a range of services that support them in enhancing their quality of life and participating more fully in their communities. While program development is currently underway, it is anticipated that these services will include health and wellness supports, interpersonal skills, personal management skills, and connections with existing community services.

Strategy:

- Implementation of a revised Community Assistance Program.

Ministry Performance Plan

Link to Government's Five Great Goals

Ministry Mission

To focus on the customer by transforming the way we deliver services in employment and assistance, using effective and outcome based practices, and working in collaboration with ministries, other levels of government and service agencies

Direct Impact	Indirect Impact	Ministry Goals	Ministry Objectives	Performance Measures
Goal 3: Build the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities, those with special needs, children at risk, and seniors.	Goal 1: Make British Columbia the best-educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent. Goal 2: Lead the way in North America in healthy living and physical fitness. Goal 5: Create more jobs per capita than anywhere else in Canada.	1. Deliver responsive, innovative and effective services to clients in need.	1.1 Clients receive appropriate and responsive income and supplementary assistance supports that meet their changing needs.	Per cent of BC population aged 19-64 receiving temporary assistance with employment-related obligations.
			1.2 Persons with disabilities who are unable to provide for their basic needs will receive the assistance they need and be supported in becoming as independent as possible.	Per cent of total caseload in receipt of disability assistance.
			1.3 Deliver quality client-centric services that are consistent, respectful, innovative and accountable.	Per cent of ministry services provided to clients that meet or exceed established service standards.
			1.4 Individuals have access to a fair and timely reconsideration and appeal process.	Per cent of reconsideration decisions that are made within 10 business days.
		2. Provide low-income persons with disabilities with the best system of supports in Canada.	2.1 Persons with disabilities who seek employment or volunteer opportunities are supported through the integrated Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities.	Average time required for decision on a new application for Persons With Disabilities designation.
			2.2 Minister's Council on Employment for Persons with Disabilities continues to remove barriers to employment for persons with disabilities through partnerships with business and industry throughout the province.	Percentage of persons receiving disability assistance with income from working or a volunteer supplement.
			2.3 Develop and implement a comprehensive and integrated system of supports and services for persons with disabilities.	

Ministry Performance Plan

Link to Government's Five Great Goals

Ministry Mission

To focus on the customer by transforming the way we deliver services in employment and assistance, using effective and outcome based practices, and working in collaboration with ministries, other levels of government and service agencies

Direct Impact	Indirect Impact	Ministry Goals	Ministry Objectives	Performance Measures
Goal 3: Build the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities, those with special needs, children at risk, and seniors.	Goal 1: Make British Columbia the best-educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent. Goal 2: Lead the way in North America in healthy living and physical fitness. Goal 5: Create more jobs per capita than anywhere else in Canada.	1. Deliver responsive, innovative and effective services to clients in need.	1.1 Clients receive appropriate and responsive income and supplementary assistance supports that meet their changing needs. 1.2 Persons with disabilities who are unable to provide for their basic needs will receive the assistance they need and be supported in becoming as independent as possible. 1.3 Deliver quality client-centric services that are consistent, respectful, innovative and accountable. 1.4 Individuals have access to a fair and timely reconsideration and appeal process.	Per cent of BC population aged 19-64 receiving temporary assistance with employment-related obligations. Per cent of total caseload in receipt of disability assistance. Per cent of ministry services provided to clients that meet or exceed established service standards. Per cent of reconsideration decisions that are made within 10 business days.
		2. Provide low-income persons with disabilities with the best system of supports in Canada.	2.1 Persons with disabilities who seek employment or volunteer opportunities are supported through the integrated Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities. 2.2 Minister's Council on Employment for Persons with Disabilities continues to remove barriers to employment for persons with disabilities through partnerships with business and industry throughout the province. 2.3 Develop and implement a comprehensive and integrated system of supports and services for persons with disabilities.	Average time required for decision on a new application for Persons With Disabilities designation. Percentage of persons receiving disability assistance with income from working or a volunteer supplement.

Link to Government's Five Great Goals		Ministry Mission		
		To focus on the customer by transforming the way we deliver services in employment and assistance, using effective and outcome based practices, and working in collaboration with ministries, other levels of government and service agencies		
Direct Impact	**Indirect Impact**	**Ministry Goals**	**Ministry Objectives**	**Performance Measures**
Goal 3: Build the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities, those with special needs, children at risk, and seniors.	Goal 1: Make British Columbia the best-educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent. Goal 2: Lead the way in North America in healthy living and physical fitness. Goal 5: Create more jobs per capita than anywhere else in Canada.	3. Support integrated service delivery through cross ministry social, health, educational and employment services that provide disadvantaged British Columbians with supports that are accessible and responsive to their unique needs.	3.1 Link clients with the Ministry of Health's ActNow initiative which addresses the risk factors of physical inactivity, tobacco use, obesity, poor nutrition and alcohol use during pregnancy. 3.2 Contribute to government's effort to maximize the physical, intellectual, social and emotional potential of the province's children through the "Strong Start" program. 3.3 Provide homeless British Columbians with community-based support services in collaboration with the Premier's Task Force on Homelessness, Mental Illness and Addictions. 3.4 Improve the employment and literacy supports available to Aboriginal people through collaboration with Aboriginal organizations and other ministry stakeholders, ministries and governments. 3.5 Support the development of common systems and information sharing among social sector ministries to improve service delivery and enhance client outcomes.	Report on the impact of contributing strategies including key project milestones, client outcomes and service enhancements where possible. Continue to review potential indicators of performance.
		4. Introduce new employment programming that is flexible in meeting individual client needs to achieve sustainable employment.	4.1 Job ready clients will be assisted to reach independence as quickly as possible. 4.2 Invest in clients with barriers to advance progress towards sustainable employment.	Average per cent of clients with employment related obligations who leave the caseload each month.

Link to Government's Five Great Goals		Ministry Mission To focus on the customer by transforming the way we deliver services in employment and assistance, using effective and outcome based practices, and working in collaboration with ministries, other levels of government and service agencies		
Direct Impact	**Indirect Impact**	**Ministry Goals**	**Ministry Objectives**	**Performance Measures**
Goal 3: Build the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities, those with special needs, children at risk, and seniors.	Goal 1: Make British Columbia the best-educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent. Goal 2: Lead the way in North America in healthy living and physical fitness. Goal 5: Create more jobs per capita than anywhere else in Canada.	3. Support integrated service delivery through cross ministry social, health, educational and employment services that provide disadvantaged British Columbians with supports that are accessible and responsive to their unique needs.	3.1 Link clients with the Ministry of Health's ActNow initiative which addresses the risk factors of physical inactivity, tobacco use, obesity, poor nutrition and alcohol use during pregnancy. 3.2 Contribute to government's effort to maximize the physical, intellectual, social and emotional potential of the province's children through the "Strong Start" program. 3.3 Provide homeless British Columbians with community-based support services in collaboration with the Premier's Task Force on Homelessness, Mental Illness and Addictions. 3.4 Improve the employment and literacy supports available to Aboriginal people through collaboration with Aboriginal organizations and other ministry stakeholders, ministries and governments. 3.5 Support the development of common systems and information sharing among social sector ministries to improve service delivery and enhance client outcomes.	Report on the impact of contributing strategies including key project milestones, client outcomes and service enhancements where possible. Continue to review potential indicators of performance.
		4. Introduce new employment programming that is flexible in meeting individual client needs to achieve sustainable employment.	4.1 Job ready clients will be assisted to reach independence as quickly as possible. 4.2 Invest in clients with barriers to advance progress towards sustainable employment.	Average per cent of clients with employment related obligations who leave the caseload each month.

Related Initiatives and Planning Processes

Regulatory Reform

The ministry will support Government's Regulatory Reform initiatives by committing to controlling regulatory burden and improving regulatory quality by:

- Identifying at least one regulatory reform opportunity that will shift the ministry's regulations to be more citizen-centred, cost-effective, results-based, and responsive to our clients by reducing and/or streamlining the steps or business processes involved in complying with ministry regulations; and
- Adhering to the regulatory criteria set out in the Regulatory Reform Policy, and targeting a zero per cent net increase in regulation through 2008/09. As reported in the 2004/05 Annual Service Plan Report, the ministry exceeded its three-year target of a 33 per cent regulatory reduction by achieving 34.3 per cent reduction by June 2004.

Information Resources Management Plan

The ministry Information Resource Management Plan overview is available on the ministry website at:
http://www.eia.gov.bc.ca/sp/

Citizen-Centred Service Delivery

Improvement in the design and delivery of client services remains a key priority of government. In keeping with this emphasis, the ministry will continue to pursue a number of initiatives targeted to better serve our clients and their families including:

Transformed Administrative Processes

Integrated Service Delivery, implemented in 2005/06, is a new approach to delivering services that was informed by the feedback of front-line staff, clients and stakeholders. ISD transforms the way front-line staff serve and engage clients through new tools, information systems, processes and resources which offer:

- More fair, thorough and transparent administrative processes;
- Additional client contacts to work with clients to explore their initial and ongoing eligibility requirements;

- Improved information exchanges regarding available service offerings that clients may be able to receive, including child care and other sources of income such as Employment Insurance or Canada Pension Plan;
- Program delivery that offers consistent practices and levels of service regardless of where clients access our services in the province; and
- Enhanced Loss Management controls which will reduce the incidence of fraud and inappropriate payments.

Service Oriented Culture

The ministry is committed to the continued development of a service culture that is customer-focused, results-oriented and commonly held by all staff. Beginning in January 2006 and continuing through 2006/07, staff from across the ministry and all regions of the province will be participating in a series of workshops to establish our common organizational values, a Service Code and Service Standards. The results of this broad based employee engagement will provide consistent service-oriented day-to-day behaviours, and provide a basis for evaluating our performance in delivering services and interactions with clients.

As an organization, we also recognize that we must support and invest in our staff in order to provide them with the knowledge and skills necessary to implement innovative service delivery solutions and meet the standards our clients deserve.

Outreach Programs

Individual circumstances and challenges should not preclude British Columbians from receiving the assistance they require. Over the next three years, the ministry will partner with local governments, the Premier's Task Force on Homelessness, Mental Illness and Addictions and stakeholder groups to actively provide British Columbians in need access to our caseload. While the issues of homelessness are complex and not unique to British Columbia, we remain committed to making a difference and supporting better outcomes for individuals and communities, such as the Vancouver Downtown Eastside.

Improved Client Access

The ministry is committed to increasing clients' choice in how and when they access our services and information. Over the next three years, the ministry will continue to build upon the following service channels to better meet the needs of our clients and improve consistency across points of access:

- Face-to-face: Ministry services are provided through 104 offices located in all regions of the province. Clients are provided with the opportunity to schedule individual appointments with front-line staff in order to better serve them and avoid unnecessary delays.
- Telephone Service Centres: Clients and members of the public may also contact ministry staff through a toll-free number referring them to a Service Centre or an Employment and Assistance Centre. Because the number is toll-free, the service is available using any telephone. Approximately 50,000 calls are answered in the province each month through this service, responding to client crises such as a need for groceries or shelter. Expanded hours offered by the Interior Service Centre further enhance the ministry's ability to assist clients in need.
- Internet: Increasingly, our clients are using the Internet as their preferred method of interacting with the ministry. Web-based services will include an online resource providing one-stop policy and program information for staff and the public; an Income Assistance Estimator offering immediate estimates on eligibility and potential levels of assistance; Orientation services offered with text and audio in twelve languages, and a Job Bank website with extensive links to employment information. To ensure that clients can access our Internet services, the ministry provides computer access in all our Employment and Assistance Centres and through partnerships with Service BC government agents in communities across the province.

These initiatives provide particular benefit to our rural and disabled clients. We recognize that ultimately successful implementation of multi-channel service delivery is dependent upon the convenience and improved service it provides our clients.

Partnerships and Collaboration

Ongoing efforts will be made to partner with other ministries and community organizations to deliver coordinated and effective social, health, educational and employment services. Key initiatives include:

- working with the Ministry of Health to expand use of health and dental supports among eligible British Columbians;
- collaboration with the federal government to increase the take-up rates of federal assistance and benefits;
- assisting local governments and law enforcement agencies combat the issue of predatory and unscrupulous landlords and instances of fraud; and
- continued support for the Vancouver Agreement.

Flexible Employment Programming

Employment programming for clients has been redesigned beginning in 2006/07 to introduce new flexibility to better accommodate the skills and circumstances of our clients. Clients will soon be able to participate in new programming that is responsive to their individual needs and the needs of the labour market.

Appendices

The following appendices are available in a web-based supplement to this Service Plan:

Appendix 1: Glossary

Appendix 2: Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance Regions

Appendix 3: Performance Measures Methodology

Appendix 4: Assumptions and Sensitivities

Appendix 5: Caseload by Client Group, and Program Expenditures by Client Group

These appendices may be accessed at:
http://www.eia.gov.bc.ca/sp

Appendix 1

Glossary

Caseload — Number of cases receiving income assistance, including hardship, under the Temporary Assistance and Disability Assistance programs. Cases receiving Medical Services Only or Long Term Care are not included in the caseload.

Disability Assistance — Financial assistance provided to eligible persons who have been designated as meeting the criteria of a Person with Disabilities, as defined in the *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act.*

Earned income — Any money or value received in exchange for work or the provision of a service (this includes stipends provided to clients for their participation in volunteer positions designed to build employment skills).

Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal — Agency that administers the appeal panel process. Its role begins when a Notice of Appeal is received from the appellant. At that point, the ministry operates at 'arms length' from the tribunal process, and is simply one of the parties to the appeal.

Employment Plan — A document that initiates discussion between the client and the ministry and supports employment planning and successful client outcomes. This is a mandatory requirement for most clients with employment-related obligations.

Employment Programs — Programs targeted toward employment and job readiness established or funded under the *Employment and Assistance Act* and the *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act.*

Employment-related Obligations — The ministry's expectation that a client will seek work, based upon individual ability.

Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities (EPPD) — A program designed to assist persons with disabilities to participate in employment-related activities to the best of their ability. The program recognizes that individuals experience disabilities in varying degrees, at different stages of their lives, and provides flexibility for those who want to volunteer or work full-time, part-time, or be self-employed.

Persons with Disabilities — People meeting the criteria as set out in the *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act.*

Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers — People with multiple barriers to employment are those who meet the criteria as set out in the Employment and Assistance Regulations. Examples of multiple barriers are literacy issues, limited education and work experience, long-term dependence on assistance and medical conditions that preclude or impede employment.

Reconsideration — When a client disagrees with a ministry decision, the client may request a review of the decision. The process involves a written request, which is reviewed by a Reconsideration Adjudicator who makes a new decision. If the client does not agree with that decision, the matter may proceed to the Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal.

Supplementary Assistance — Supplementary assistance addresses pressing needs, such as health assistance, seniors' supplement and bus passes.

Temporary Assistance — Financial assistance provided to eligible persons who are expected to achieve independence through employment.

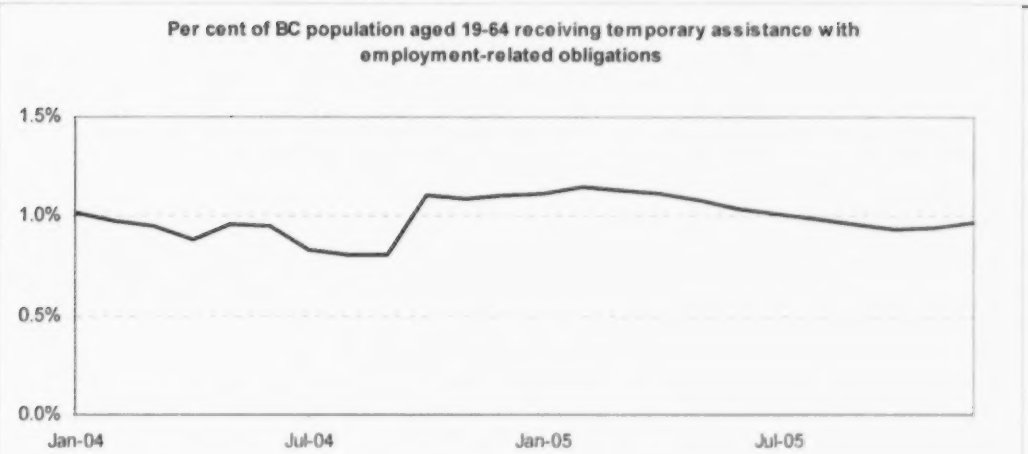
Appendix 2

Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance Regions

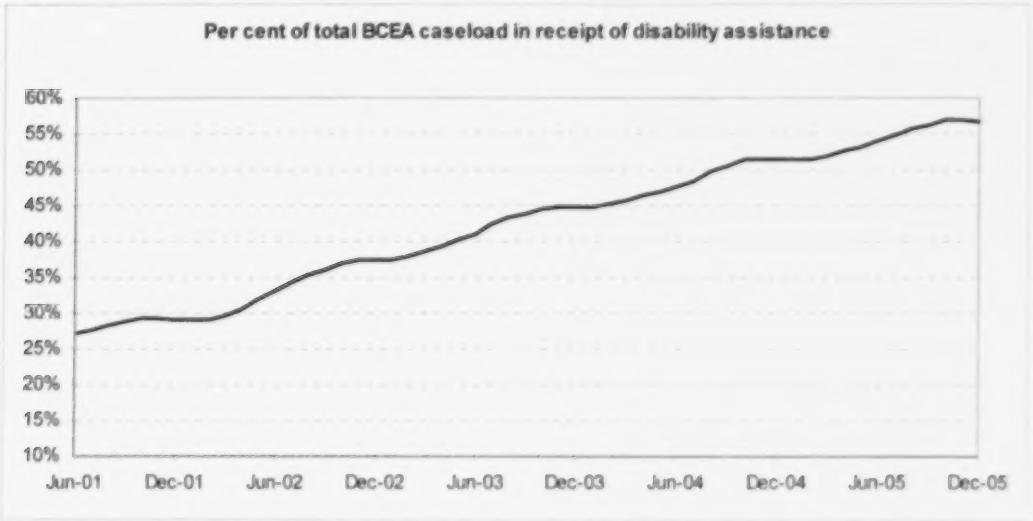
Appendix 3

Performance Measures Methodology

1.1 Per cent of BC population aged 19-64 receiving temporary assistance with employment-related obligations	
Description	This measure tracks temporary assistance clients 19 to 64 years of age with employment obligations (i.e. in the Expected To Work or Expected To Work-Medical Condition categories) reported as a proportion of BC's population in the same age group. A lower percentage indicates that fewer people expected to work are in need of assistance and more are participating in the workforce. Data for this measure is available monthly. Annual results are reported as an average based on a calendar year.
Why is it important?	Assisting clients to find employment continues to be a critical aspect of the ministry's mission. Changes in the volume of individuals receiving assistance that are expected to work indicate the strength of the economy, the effectiveness of the programs, and incentives provided to individuals to find employment.
Data Sources	Population estimates are obtained from BC Stats, an arms-length independent source of provincial statistics. The ministry's caseload data is obtained from the ministry's Management Information System (MIS), an electronic case management system.
Comments	The baseline for this measure was established in 2001/02. Since then, the methodology for calculating this measure has been adjusted to include the Expected To Work – Medical Condition category introduced in 2004.



1.2 Per cent of total caseload in receipt of disability assistance	
Description	This measure tracks the proportion of the ministry's cases receiving disability assistance. A higher percentage may be indicative of: - decreasing number of individuals receiving temporary assistance - and/or increasing number of individuals who are receiving disability assistance Data for this measure is available monthly. Annual results are reported as an average based on a calendar year.
Why is it important?	A strong economy and an aging population are expected to have a significant impact on the composition of ministry's caseload. The ministry tracks this measure to anticipate future trends in the ministry's caseload composition and emerging trends in the needs of clients with disabilities. The ministry uses this data for budget allocation, forecasting, policy development, and ensuring delivery of appropriate services that meet the changing needs of the ministry's clients.
Data Sources	The ministry's caseload data is obtained from the ministry's Management Information System (MIS), an electronic case management system.
Comments	The baseline for this measure was established in 2001/02 and results have been reported yearly since then.



1.3 Percent of ministry services provided to clients that meet or exceed established service standards	
Description	Over the next year, the ministry will develop a Service Code which will define Service Standards upon which ministry performance will be evaluated from the clients' perspective.
Why is it important?	The ministry is committed to implementing strategies to build a client-focused culture and service delivery. This measure will provide an opportunity to monitor the progress made toward achieving these objectives.
Data Sources	A methodology for measuring these individual standards will be developed during 2006/07.
Comments	This measure is currently under development with the baseline to be established in 2006/07.

1.4 Percent of reconsideration decisions that are made within 10 business days	
Description	Clients can apply to Reconsideration Adjudicators to review the ministry's decisions regarding eligibility for assistance and services. This measure gauges the proportion of these decisions that are made within 10 business days. A higher percentage for this measure indicates the ministry is doing a better job of meeting regulatory requirements and providing timely and efficient service to clients. Data for this measure is available monthly. Annual results are reported as an average based on a calendar year.
Why is it important?	This measure indicates how well the ministry is responding to client's increasing demand for review. Information on reconsiderations and appeals also allows the ministry to assess compliance with policy, service standards, and the principles of administrative fairness. The ministry engages in ongoing appraisal of the reconsideration and appeal process as part of its overall evaluation of service delivery.
Data Sources	Data for this measure is obtained from the ministry's electronic Reconsiderations and Appeals System, which contains information on the number and outcomes of reconsiderations.
Comments	The adjudication of health decisions in particular represents a large and growing proportion of the reconsideration requests that the ministry undertakes annually. The baseline for this measure was established in 2003/04 and results have been reported yearly since then.

2.0 Average time required for decision on a new application for Persons With Disabilities designation	
Description	This measure evaluates the ministry's performance in the review and adjudication of applications for designation as a Person with Disabilities. A shorter timeframe for this measure indicates that clients are receiving more timely and efficient service. Data for this measure is collected monthly. For the purpose of annual reporting, results for this measure reflect the average number of working weeks required to adjudicate an application during the fiscal year.
Why is it important?	The length of the adjudication process reflects the ministry's ability to provide timely decisions that comply with legislative requirements and the principles of administrative fairness.
Data Sources	This measure is tracked by the ministry's Health Assistance Branch.
Comments	The baseline for this measure was established for 2005/06.

2.1 Percentage of persons receiving disability assistance with income from working or a volunteer supplement	
Description	This measure tracks the number of clients receiving disability assistance benefits who have also earned employment income and/or volunteer supplements. An increase in this measure indicates improved community participation, independence and employability among ministry clients designated as Persons with Disabilities. Clients with disabilities who volunteer may be eligible to receive a monthly volunteer supplement. Because not all clients who volunteer apply for the supplement, this measure provides a conservative count of volunteer activity. Data for this measure is available monthly. Annual results are reported as an average based on a calendar year.
Why is it important?	Supporting persons with disabilities who are interested in working or volunteering in finding these opportunities continuous to be an important mandate for the ministry. Income

	from theses sources is an indicator of progress as part-time work may be a stepping-stone to full-time employment and volunteer work may lead to employment, as it often provides valuable skills and experience. Volunteering is also an opportunity for clients receiving disability assistance to contribute to their communities, reduce social isolation through enhanced relationships with others and lead enriched lives.
Data Sources	The ministry's Management Information System (MIS) tracks the number of volunteer supplements issued each month. Income from working is also being tracked by the system and applied towards earning exemptions. This information is used to report on results for this measure.
Comments	The baseline for this measure was established in 2001/02 and results have been reported yearly since then.

4.1 Average percentage of client with employment related obligations who leave the caseload each month.	
Description	This measure tracks the proportion of employable clients (i.e. in the Expected To Work or Expected To Work-Medical Condition categories) who stopped receiving income assistance each month. Data for this measure is available monthly. Annual results are reported as an average based on a calendar year.
Why is it important?	Assisting clients to achieve financial independence is a critical aspect of the ministry's mission. Because clients are not required to report the reasons why they no longer need assistance, this is a measure of the effectiveness of ministry programs and incentives that enable clients to achieve financial independence and therefore leave the caseload. In addition, this measure is also an indicator of the strength of the provincial economy and labour force.
Data Source	The data for this measure is obtained from MIS, the ministry's case management system, and reflects the changes that occur within the caseload each month.
Comments	The baseline for this measure will be established based on 2005/06 results.

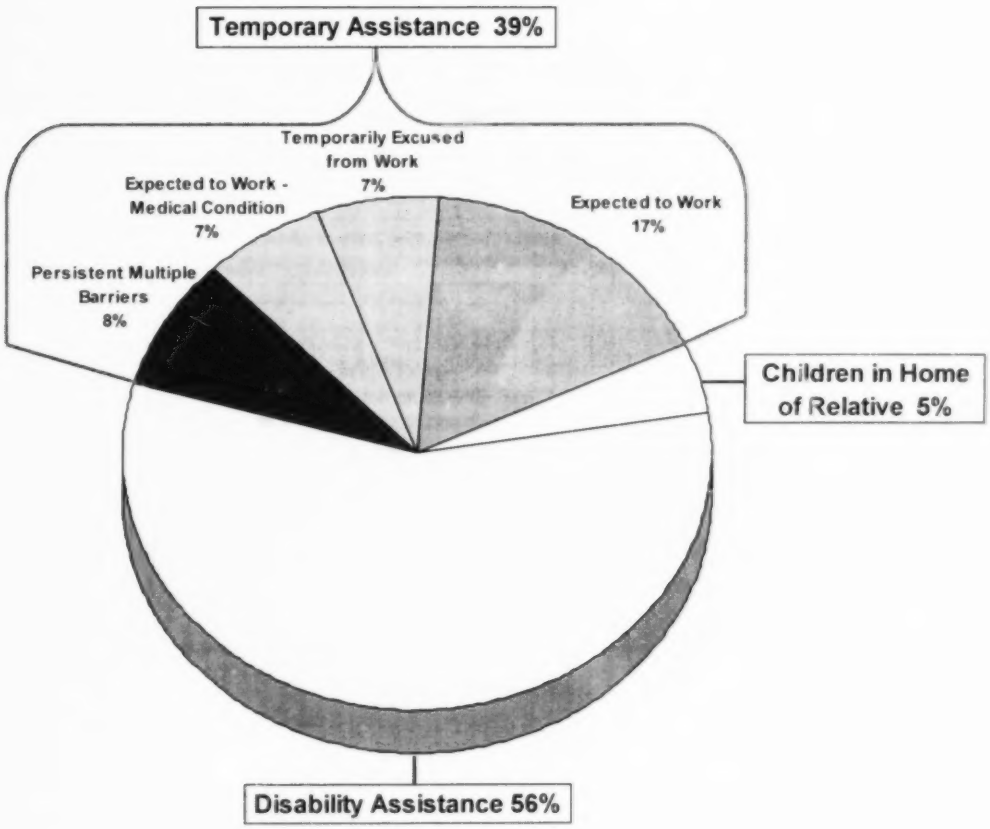
Appendix 4

Assumptions and Sensitivities

Ministry Programs and Assumptions	*September Update*	Updated Forecast	Budget Estimate 2006/07	Plan 2007/08	Plan 2008/09	Sensitivities 2006/07
	2005/06					
	($ millions unless otherwise specified)					
Temporary Assistance..... annual average caseload (#)	50,500	47,100	47,150	46,715	47,030	The Expected to Work caseload is sensitive to fluctuations in economic and employment trends in the service sector. A 1% change in the Temporary Assistance annual average caseload or average cost per case will affect expenditures from $3 to $4 million annually.
Disability Assistance..... annual average caseload (#)	57,050	57,800	62,450	66,485	70,370	The caseload for persons with disabilities is sensitive to the aging of the population and overall health needs. The average cost per case is sensitive to the composition of the caseload. A 1% change in the disability assistance annual average caseload or average cost per case will affect expenditures from $5 to $6 million annually.
Total annual average caseload (#)	107,600	104,900	109,600	113,200	117,400	The average cost per case is sensitive to the composition of the caseload, and reported income. A 1% change in the annual caseload or average cost per case will affect expenditures from $8 to $10 million annually.

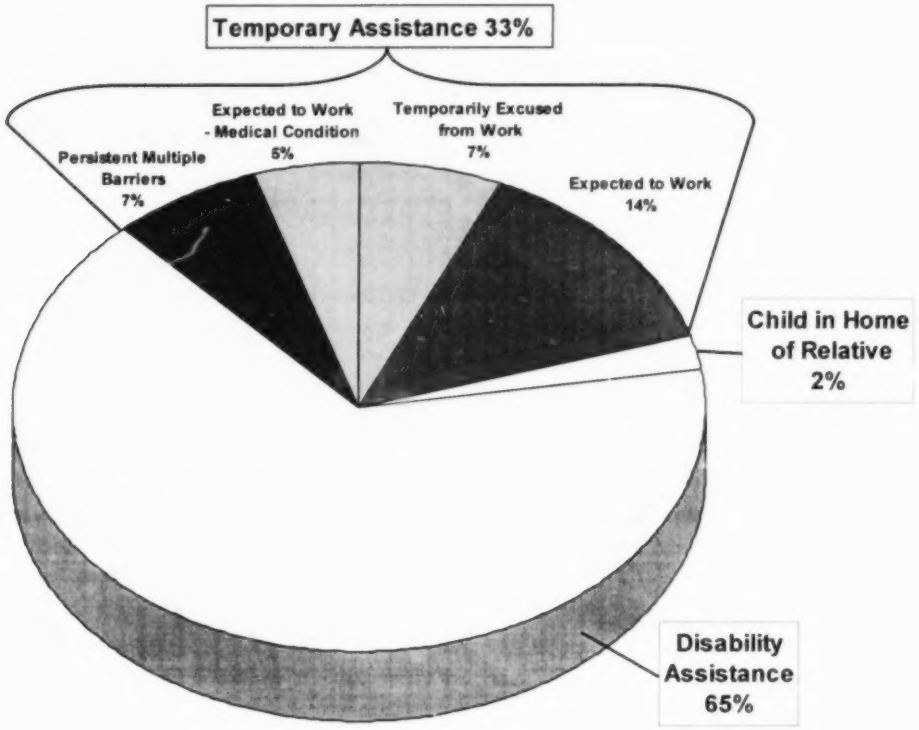
Appendix 5

Caseload by Client Group


Temporary Assistance 39%
Temporarily Excused from Work 7%
Expected to Work - Medical Condition 7%
Expected to Work 17%
Persistent Multiple Barriers 8%
Children in Home of Relative 5%
Disability Assistance 56%

Source: Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance – November 2005

Program Expenditures by Client Group


Temporary Assistance 33%
Expected to Work - Medical Condition 5%
Temporarily Excused from Work 7%
Persistent Multiple Barriers 7%
Expected to Work 14%
Child in Home of Relative 2%
Disability Assistance 65%

Source: Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance – November 2005